



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY
WESTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

HUMAN TRAFFICKING RESCUE PROJECT
US ATTORNEY LAUNCHES INITIATIVE TO COMBAT
‘MODERN SLAVE TRADE’

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – Bradley J. Schlozman, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, and Wan J. Kim, Assistant Attorney General for the Civil Rights Division, formally unveiled today a Human Trafficking Task Force to combat the unlawful trafficking in persons in the Western District of Missouri. In announcing this new initiative, Schlozman and Kim were joined by representatives from an array of federal and local law enforcement and non-governmental organizations. The announcement coincided with a training seminar on human trafficking attended by over 150 law enforcement officials, prosecutors, and social service agencies from throughout Western Missouri and Eastern Kansas.

“Human trafficking is nothing less than modern-day slavery, and this task force is designed to help identify, and ultimately eradicate, this evil from our community,” Schlozman said. “Every year, thousands of individuals - mostly women and children - are brought into the United States and held captive, coerced into forced labor or sexual exploitation, by peddlers in human misery. Human trafficking is an unconscionable tragedy that strikes at the core of our nation’s most cherished values of human dignity and freedom. Although this is a global problem, it is present right here in the Western District of Missouri as well. This office, working in tandem with our critical coalition partners from law enforcement, non-governmental organizations, and the community as a whole, will work vigorously to protect the helpless victims in this district, and prosecute the traffickers to the fullest extent under the law.”

Assistant Attorney General Kim added, “Task forces are critical in developing partnerships among law enforcement agencies and non-governmental organizations. Together, we can work far more effectively to combat the horrors of human trafficking.”

The Human Trafficking Task Force is comprised of the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the Western District of Missouri; the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement; the Federal

Bureau of Investigations; the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of the Inspector General; the U.S. Department of Labor, Wage and Hour Division; the Jackson County Prosecuting Attorney's Office; the Independence Police Department; the Kansas City, Missouri Police Department; and Hope House.

Cynthia L. Phillips, Assistant United States Attorney, is the point of contact for the U.S. Attorney's Office. To report evidence of possible trafficking in persons, individuals should either call Ms. Phillips at 816-426-3122, or the Civil Rights Division's Trafficking Hotline at 1-888-428-7581.

This news release, as well as additional information about the Office of the United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, is available on-line at

www.usdoj.gov/usao/mow/index.html

